



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 29, 2026

Centralized Case Management Operations
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F HHH Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Via Email Only (OCRComplaint@hhs.gov)

Dear Sir or Madam:

On January 27, 2026, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz posted a video to an official social media account in which he spewed baseless and racially charged allegations targeting the Armenian community in Los Angeles, including that a popular bakery's use of "Russian Armenian" "lettering" and "language" in public signage was an indicator of affiliation with the Mafia.¹

Such racially charged and false public statements by anyone involved in administering these critical federal healthcare programs seriously risks chilling participation in those programs by individuals targeted by the statements. They also reflect discriminatory animus, and reveal a discriminatory motive that could infect how investigations of alleged fraud are conducted. The risk of those harms is compounded when the statements came from the top decisionmaker at CMS. Additionally, Dr. Oz's comments have already caused real world harm, as the bakery targeted by his comments reported a 30% drop in sales after this video's release.

Accordingly, on behalf of the Armenian community in California, our office is filing this civil rights complaint and seeking an investigation and

¹ <https://x.com/DrOzCMS/status/2016150183868878882>.

corrective action to address potential violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. See 42 U.S.C. 2000d ("No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.").

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions on this or any other matter. Communications regarding this complaint can be directed as follows:

Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone: 916-445-2841
Email: govlegalunit@gov.ca.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Sapp", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Sapp
Legal Affairs Secretary
Office of Governor Gavin Newsom